



Tucson Parks and Recreation Commission  
April 28, 2010  
Meeting Minutes

The meeting of the Tucson Parks and Recreation Commission took place on Wednesday, April 28, 2010. The meeting was held at the Parks and Recreation, Mesquite Room, 900 S. Randolph Way, Tucson, Arizona.

**1. Roll Call**

The meeting was called to order with a quorum at 3:33 p.m. The following individuals were in attendance:

- **Commission Members Present:** Chairperson Steve Anderson, Ward 4; Jonathan Rothschild, Mayor's Office; Kristin Almquist, Ward 1; Elayne Feder, Ward 2, arrived at 4:05 p.m.; Deborah Tosline, Ward 3; Bob Kovitz, Ward 6; Vickie Mesimer, Ward 5, arrived at 3:44 p.m.
- **Commission Members Excused:** none
- **Staff Members Present:** Fred H. Gray, Jr., Director; John Sefton, Deputy Director; Mike Hayes, Deputy Director - Tucson City Golf; Jim Conroy, East District Administrator; Susan Basford, Zoo and Reid Park Administrator; Peg Weber, Northwest District Administrator; Reenie Ochoa, Southwest District Administrator; Jane Duarte, Capital Program Manager; and Irma Adams, Recording Secretary.
- **Staff Members Absent:** none
- **Others in Attendance:** Clague A. Van Slyke, III, President of the Tucson Parks Foundation

**2. Approval of Minutes of March 24, 2010**

Motion (Rothschild/Tosline) to approve the minutes of March 24, 2010. Motion passed by a unanimous voice vote.

**3. Call to the Audience**

Clague A. Van Slyke, III, President of the Tucson Parks Foundation made a brief presentation regarding the Parks Foundation.

**4. Commission Subcommittee Reports**

**a. Awards Program**

Peg Weber stated that the Awards Committee would begin meeting in September to work on the process. Ms. Weber stated that the Awards Presentation at the February 9, 2010 Mayor and Council meeting was well received and suggested the award presentations continue to be made at a Mayor and Council meeting.

**b. Commission Strategic Services Plan (standing item)**

Chairperson Steve Anderson stated there was nothing to report.

**c. Community Advocacy Group/Pima Parks Alliance**

Jonathan Rothschild stated that the Group was continuing to meet with both of the neighborhoods (Balboa Park/Marty Birdman Center and Toumey Park) and that area businesses were going to be approached for donations. A flyer has been prepared and the Group is hoping

to raise donations from the area businesses to keep Balboa Park or Marty Birdman Center open longer hours by holding activities. Fund raising efforts will begin next month.

**d. Foundation Liaison and Assistance**

Chairperson Anderson stated he would prepare something for the next meeting.

Mr. Gray stated that Mr. Van Slyke's presentation is an example of the types of partnerships and relationships that the Commissioners envisioned. Mr. Gray suggested Commissioners refer constituents toward joining the Parks Foundation, Tucson Zoological Society, and/or Pima Parks Alliance, etc. There are many opportunities to support the Department.

Bob Kovitz asked if materials were available at the Council Offices informing interested individuals how they can contribute to these organizations?

Mr. Gray replied that the Department's non-profit organizations are referenced in the Program Guide and Class Catalog. However, applications are not available at the Council Offices. Mr. Gray continued by stating that membership applications could be available at the Centers.

Mr. Rothschild agreed that having information available to the public at the Council Offices on how individuals could make donations to these non-profit agencies was a good idea.

Mr. Gray stated that might be better done through the Department's facilities.

**5. Agency Accreditation Presentation**

John Sefton, Deputy Director and Jim Klingenfus, Recreation Assistant, presented the Department's Accreditation PowerPoint presentation.

Fred Gray stated that achieving Accreditation will prove that the Department has a qualified and professional staff as well as will provide recognition for what the Department does. Once the Department is accredited, there will be a reaccreditation process every five years. Accreditation is a team effort and labor intensive.

**6. Silverlake Park Burrowing Owls**

Jane Duarte informed the Commissioners of the burrowing owls that made their home in the drainage pipe at the park. The owls quickly adapted to their new home.

**7. Consideration of Leisure Classes**

Fred Gray stated that the City Manager engaged in a Budget Option Balancing System (BOBS) which allowed issues to be brought forward by the City Manager's Office, Departments, Council Office, Labor Unions and others. Mr. Gray stated that one of the issues that arose during budget discussions was whether to eliminate Leisure Classes operated by the private sector. Parks and Recreation prepared a response on the BOBS form. Mr. Gray continued by stating that the Department's class offerings are primarily entry level. Individuals seeking advanced, professional instruction must go to the private sector. The Department's program fees for leisure classes have been priced for full cost recovery which included full time staff, direct, and indirect costs associated with that function. However, the issue regarding full cost recovery was affected by the Sliding Scale Discount. Discounts were available at 25%, 50%, 75%, and 90%. Staff prepared an analysis and found that of the 20,000 participants in our classes, 75% qualified for some level of discount. Also, 97% qualified at the 90% level. However, the



Mayor and Council recently approved the Revenue Pricing Policy which eliminated the Sliding Scale Discount for these classes which results in full cost recovery. The elimination of classes would reduce the General Fund expenditures and revenues by the same amount. Eliminating the Leisure Class function would be a net zero impact to the General Fund. At the time of the discussion, the Department's Class Catalog and Program Guide had been advertised for summer programming. The earliest implementation for consideration for this change in service is recommended for the Fall 2010 registration period. Also, the Department suggested that the issue be referred to the Commission for further analysis and recommendation to the Mayor and Council. Mr. Gray noted that whenever there is a fee increase or policy change, participation usually declines for a period of time and then increases. Leisure Classes have a required number of participants and if that minimum is not reached, the class is cancelled.

Reenie Ochoa stated that summer registration is slow. However, it is hard to tell whether that is due to the economy and/or the result of the elimination of the Sliding Scale Program. Staff will know more in a couple of weeks. Ms. Ochoa continued by stating that the Summer session is geared toward children's programs rather than the Leisure Classes.

Mr. Rothschild asked if there was still a discount for Leisure Classes.

Mr. Gray replied that Leisure Classes no longer qualify for discounts. The Department's pricing policy structure states that the more participation or community-wide support or benefit, the less it costs. There are now four categories: service level one – free; service level two – KIDCO, etc., are subject to the 25% discount; service level three and service level four – there are no discounts available.

Mr. Rothschild asked what the Commission's task was?

Mr. Gray stated that the Commission is being asked whether or not Parks and Recreation should continue to offer Leisure Classes.

Mr. Kovitz stated that if a class is eliminated there is no income and no expense. Is there an expectation that if leisure classes are eliminated and/or reduced there would be a percentage of staff cost reduction?

Mr. Gray stated that the intent of the BOBS was looking for efficiency or potential budget reductions. The question was raised as to why Parks and Recreation offers classes when many of these classes are offered by Pima College or private sector businesses. Is Parks and Recreation competing with private sector businesses? Mr. Gray stated that the Leisure Classes budget was approximately \$1 million with revenues collected in the amount of \$865,000. Staff believed that if the sliding scale discount was eliminated, revenues would have been at full cost recovery.

Mr. Kovitz stated that the one million amounts to a small percentage of the department's overall budget of \$42 million.

Mr. Gray stated that staff had to be objective but also point out that Mayor and Council approved a discount policy, by eliminating the program you eliminate some part time and full time employees but you also lose the \$1 million revenue.

Ms. Mesimer asked what would happen to the seniors if Leisure Classes were eliminated? Ms. Mesimer stated that the elderly would be hurt by the lack of programs and the fact that they cannot afford to pay

full or higher fees. Also, if Leisure Classes are eliminated, there will be many children with nothing to do.

Mr. Rothschild asked if the elimination of discounts for Leisure Classes would affect cause a decline in registration? Mr. Rothschild continued by asking what the Commission could do if they did not want Leisure Classes eliminated?

Ms. Ochoa stated that all Centers offer basic recreation programs such as senior and children's programs. Ms. Ochoa continued by stating that the programs at Centers are not at the same technical level as Leisure Classes. In past years, the Department has had huge waiting lists for its classes and staff felt that attrition losses could be recouped by those individuals on the waiting list who would pay the full class fees.

Ms. Almquist asked if the private sector would be able to provide the same classes?

Mr. Gray stated that the Department's classes are entry level; the private sector offers a higher level of instruction.

Mr. Rothschild asked if the City's Leisure Class fees were at real market rates? Mr. Rothschild continued by stating that eliminating the Leisure Classes would erase a benefit to the community.

Mr. Gray replied that the City's fees were still cheaper. Mr. Gray stated the City Manager recommended the proposed action plan not be included in this year's budget and referred the issue to the Tucson Parks and Recreation Commission for a recommendation. Mr. Gray continued by stating that summer registration had just begun but that staff would analyze the registration process after the summer to determine the impact of the new fees. Historically, when fees are increased, participation generally goes down for a couple of years and then it goes back up.

Mr. Rothschild asked if staff could provide a report on Leisure Class registration at the next meeting? Also, when does a response need to be made to Mayor and Council?

Mr. Gray replied yes. Mr. Gray stated that to his knowledge, Mayor and Council would consider the issue during the next budget process begins in November or December.

Mr. Rothschild stated that the Commission would make a recommendation to Mayor and Council once appropriate information is reviewed.

Mr. Kovitz stated that Pima Community College offers leisure classes at the related places of business. Is that a model that the Commission can look at? Also, should Leisure Classes be made an enterprise?

Mr. Gray stated that Leisure Classes are basically already treated like an enterprise. Leisure Classes has a separate budget. The Department codes expenditures and revenue received from Leisure Classes. The figures will affirm whether it covers all the costs.

Mr. Kovitz questioned the suggestion to eliminate Leisure Classes since it pays for itself.



Mr. Gray stated that the Program Budget would be printed shortly for Tuesday's Mayor and Council meeting. The Program Budget will show the Leisure Class area and will show zero General Fund expenditures in that program.

Mr. Kovitz asked whether consideration should be given to holding Leisure Classes at places other than Parks and Recreation facilities?

Mr. Gray stated that the Department had a significant infrastructure investment at Randolph Center. These buildings were built for the purpose of classes like ceramics, the dance studio, and photography dark room.

Ms. Ochoa stated that in the past the Department held ice skating classes at a local business. The class was a losing proposition after two years because the business wanted to charge a lot more than the City. Also, the business would not accept our discount. More importantly, the Department lost quality control if an instructor did not show up or there was a complaint. Ms. Ochoa stated that the Department still holds activities in outlying locations but the instructors are City employees.

Mr. Rothschild reiterated that eliminating Leisure Classes did not make sense and felt the Commission needed to make a recommendation.

Ms. Almquist asked Commissioners to keep in mind whether there is revenue to be generated by leasing the darkroom at Randolph Center.

**8. Discuss Outline for the Commission's Visibility and Marketing Report – Deborah Tosline**

Deborah Tosline stated she would email the outline again to Commissioners and staff for input. Ms. Tosline asked if the Commissioners wanted her to put the PowerPoint together?

Mr. Gray asked if the rate of growth in parks facilities, centers, etc., was over time or a certain time period?

Ms. Tosline replied that she needed background numbers from the Department's inception to the present showing progression. Ms. Tosline asked the members if they wished to review the outline now or wanted the document emailed to them? Ms. Tosline stated she would put the presentation together.

Mr. Rothschild asked if the purpose of the presentation was to hold meetings at the Council Offices?

Ms. Tosline stated that originally the purpose of the document was to discuss the Bond process and show support for Parks and Recreation projects.

Mr. Gray stated that initial discussion arose from the Commission's Strategic Plan. One of the Commission's goals was to establish a marketing and visibility plan. At that time, Commissioners were concerned about having more visibility with the public. Discussion was held about creating a document to share with the respective Council Member for presentation at town hall meetings. However, some Council Members do not held town hall meetings. The Commission then decided to incorporate the marketing and visibility plan with the Bond process and get support for that program.

Mr. Rothschild asked if a staff person could be assigned to work directly with Ms. Tosline on the presentation?

Ms. Tosline stated that she hoped to receive input from as many people as possible. It seems that the intent has changed a couple of times and is now addressing the impact of the recent budget cuts.

Mr. Gray stated that staff support could be provided but not until after the Accreditation Team's visit in May. Mr. Gray stated that much of the information is included in the Department's Ten-Year Strategic Plan. Mr. Gray suggested rearranging the outline by moving current status and/or issues higher up on the outline. These may also change as time progresses.

Ms. Tosline stated she would prepare a draft document for review and would add a section about the pool closures.

Mr. Kovitz stated he preferred a "generic" presentation, no more than 20 minutes long that can be used at a Rotary Club, Council Office Open House, Kiwanis Club, Neighborhood Association, PTO, etc. The presentation should include a Call to Action, which can state what we want people to do with the information.

Ms. Tosline stated that maybe more than one document was needed. Ms. Tosline stated that discussion of the Bond election would be one presentation; the other current issue is the budget cuts. Status update on Department programs would not require a Call to Action. Ms. Tosline asked the members what they felt should be the primary intent of the presentation.

Mr. Rothschild stated he agreed with inclusion of the following categories: history, status, current events, and call to action. At this point in time, Call to Action, should discuss the need for public involvement and/or support of the various Parks and Recreation non-profit organizations. Mr. Rothschild suggested providing a list of the non-profit organizations. Mr. Rothschild stated that if there is a call to cut Parks and Recreation services, the most effective action that can be taken is if 100 people attend the Mayor and Council meeting in protest of that action.

Ms. Almquist volunteered to assist Ms. Tosline.

Ms. Tosline stated she would incorporate all of the comments made into a document. Ms. Tosline continued by stating that she would send out the document for distribution. Staff input will be sought after May. Ms. Tosline then stated that some of the members wanted to talk about pools.

Mr. Gray stated that Ms. Almquist asked if pool discussion could be held under item 8. Mr. Gray stated that discussion could be held under Item 9, Budget Report.

## **9. Budget Report**

### **a. Budget Strategies/Requirements – Current Fiscal Year and Fiscal Year 2011**

Fred Gray stated the Department had spent 67% of their allocation through 75% of the fiscal year. Vacancy savings is fine at this time. Mr. Gray continued that Tucson City Golf has spent 74% of their budget.

Mr. Hayes explained that maintenance expenditures look high for Randolph Golf Course but was due to a forthcoming credit from the County for water service.



Mr. Gray distributed a Budget/Position Summary for Fiscal Year 2005 through 2011. Mr. Gray stated that the FY 2010 Adopted and Revised budget reflects the mid-year reductions. In FY 2011, the Department is significantly smaller than FY 2005 in dollars and staffing. There is a 14% reduction in overall total dollars since FY 08 and an 18% reduction in permanent staff and 28% reduction in non-permanent staff which averages to 22%. There is a FY 2010 approximate savings of \$700,000. The projected savings were not as great as anticipated because identified positions for reduction or elimination were not the actual people that left because of civil service rules and bump rights. As a result, the lower paid employees were actually laid off. Our target in mid-year FY 2009 was \$1 million which was not achieved. The FY 2011 column was the annualized savings of \$1.8 million from the mid-year reductions. The position reductions were cumulative (permanent and non-permanent) over the mid-year and full year annualized reductions of salaries. There were some efficiency savings by combining the Civic Events and Performing Arts Units. The teen program was absorbed within other budgets. Adult sports took a significant hit with the elimination of all sports except adult slo-pitch softball leagues. Staff determined that adult sports would be provided by the private sector. Slo-pitch softball was not cut because it was felt that no one would be able to accommodate 240 teams. The largest savings was in the Aquatics area which was approximately \$500,000 and was a result of the closure of 14 additional pools totaling 17 pools. Most of the savings in the Aquatics area was a result of less staff. The rationale for the summer pool closures was based on last year's reduction in the operation schedule to only ten weeks.

Mr. Gray continued by stating that the Department was charged with a target reduction of \$2 million. Some restructuring of KIDCO was performed within supervisory staff to eliminate positions. KIDCO is a \$3 million budget operation. Administration had some retirements. Ormsby Center, which served primarily as a KIDCO site, was closed as an efficiency savings. The children were accommodated at other sites in close proximity. Parks maintenance eliminated all of its non-permanent employees. The Department lost a significant number of non-permanent employees with the reduction of Center hours and with the pool closures (less lifeguards). The Department's goal was to protect as many fulltime positions as possible. Spring Training will experience a savings in contracted services next year if the Rockies do not return. Hi Corbett maintenance will also experience expenditure reductions next year if the Rockies move to Phoenix. Mr. Gray stated that his report provides an overview of the general budget reductions over the past one and a half years.

Ms. Almquist asked if staff would provide a response that Commissioners could use about the pool closures in case questions from the public? Are there alternatives available to the public?

Mr. Gray stated the initial impact occurred when the pool closures were identified as a budget reduction. Mr. Gray continued by stating some complaints may occur during swim lesson registration. Mr. Gray commented there would probably be more questions once school closes. Parks and Recreation has done their best to notify its constituents and stakeholders. Mr. Gray stated that the YMCA is considering operating some city pools, if they have the funds. Mr. Gray continued by stating that neighborhood organizations were another alternative. Of course, insurance would be required from whoever decides to operate the pools. If someone came up with \$500,000 to operate the pools, the Department would figure out a way to do that. However, at this time, the Department does not have the capacity to hire staff. Structurally, the Department's budget has changed and staff is no longer on payroll. This year may not be an issue but next year might be questionable if we do not have the revenue coming in for that.

Mr. Rothschild asked what if a grant opportunity arose and stated they wanted the money used for pools in 2010.



Mr. Gray stated that Mayor and Council would have to agree to accept the money. If someone approached the Department about operating a neighborhood pool, the Council would be interested in doing so. However, a decision would have to be made as to which Ward would get a pool opened. Mr. Gray stated that from an efficiency standpoint, pool closure saves \$500,000. However, it does not make sense to close pools in July and August in Tucson. Center hours were cut to the bone. Non-perm staff has been eliminated to the extent possible. The only other large area that would cause significant reduction is KIDCO. The community is very supportive of the program and it operates 48 weeks out of the year. Although we have 128 parks, it is difficult to close parks.

Ms. Almquist asked for a fact sheet with alternative pool listings for usage.

Mr. Gray stated that the YMCA has been a good partner. A couple of years ago, Parks and Recreation pools were closed during the winter, the YMCA allowed usage of their pools. There is no organization, private or public, that is currently able to expand its services. If an agency can perform the service at cost, that might be doable.

Ms. Mesimer asked what was happening with the closed pools.

Mr. Gray stated the pools would be maintained but there will be a cost savings in electricity and chemicals. Staff is hopeful that in the future, the Department will be able to open the pools. The revenue projections for the City show that the economy will not improve for at least another couple of years. Mayor and Council have not decided on the Core Services tax. Council Members have until June to decide on whether or not to include the issue on a November ballot. However, Mayor and Council have not decided whether to include Parks and Recreation.

Ms. Almquist asked if \$50,000 would open a pool? Also, if questions are received by Commissioners, should constituents be referred to Parks and Recreation?

Mr. Gray replied yes. If someone comes forward with money to operate a pool, the Department will make it work.

Mr. Kovitz asked if the City had a relationship with the Southern Arizona Aquatics Association?

Ms. Weber replied yes; the SAAA (through the Tucson Conquistadors) has contributed \$20,000 to repair the Amphitheater High School Pool.

Mr. Kovitz asked if the SAAA was a non-profit organization and if the SAAA should be used as a potential channel for donations?

Mr. Gray replied yes. Mr. Gray stated that donations could be made through the Tucson Parks Foundation or to the City of Tucson. Most people prefer to donate to an organization.

Ms. Almquist stated the Department be ready for next year.

Ms. Tosline asked how much it costs to operate a pool?

Mr. Gray replied that closing 17 pools saves \$500,000 for the summer which averages approximately \$30,000 to operate a pool. The cost varies depending on the size of the pool.



**10. Staff Reports**

Fred H. Gray invited the Commissioners to ask questions rather than having the District Administrators making verbal reports.

- a. Capital Projects Report**
- b. Southwest District Report**
- c. East District Report**
- d. Northwest District Report**

**e. Tucson City Golf Report**

Mike Hayes stated that a Golf Report was not prepared. Mr. Hayes continued by stating that the Greens Committee would be holding its third meeting in five weeks on April 29.

**f. Zoo and Reid Park Operations Report**

Susan Basford stated that one of the older lions at the Zoo was euthanized.

**g. Director's Report****- Update on Colorado Rockies/Hi Corbett Field (standing item)**

Fred Gray stated that the attorneys' for the City and Rockies were still negotiating. The KIDCO evaluation will be forthcoming to the Commission either in May or June.

Mr. Kovitz asked if the Rockies make a lump sum payment to get out of their contract, where will the funds go?

Mr. Gray stated the answer depends on the actual negotiation. Mr. Gray stated the financial penalty for leaving early is to payoff the debt service balance for the stadium improvements. The City believes there is a penalty but the Rockies do not. Mr. Gray continued by stating that everything was negotiable.

**11. Mayor and Council Agenda Items****• Future, Pending, and Adopted Agenda Items****Mayor and Council Agenda items since the February 24, 2010 meeting**

Parks and Recreation	Service Agreement with the University of Arizona for the Evaluation of the City's KIDCO Program; resolution #21503; passed by a 6-0 vote.	Moved to April 6, 2010	Consent Agenda Item
Parks and Recreation	Valencia Corridor Long-Range Plan; passed by a 6-0 vote	April 6, 2010	Study Session
Parks and Recreation	Department Update for Pullbox/Electrical Inspections at Athletic Facilities; passed by a 6-0 vote	April 6, 2010	Study Session
Parks and Recreation	License with Pima County Regional Flood Control District, Ward 4; Resolution 21540	May 4, 2010	Study Session
Parks and Recreation	Fourth Amendment to Lease Agreement between the City of Tucson and St. John the Evangelist Roman Catholic Parish	May 18, 2010	Study Session



**12. Commission Future Agenda Items and Next Meeting Date**

Future agenda items:

- Outline for Commission's Visibility and Marketing Report (standing item);
  - Commission Strategic Plan (standing item)
  - Sustainability (standing item)
  - Budget Strategies/Requirements-Current and Next Fiscal Year (standing item).
- Ms. Almquist requested that "Media or Communications Plan for Budget Cuts" be added under the Budget Item.

Next meeting date is scheduled for **Wednesday, May 26, 2010** at 3:30 p.m. at the Parks and Recreation Administration office, Mesquite Room, 900 S. Randolph Way.

**13. Adjournment**

It was the consensus of the Commission to adjourn at 5:29 p.m.